

OAO91 (Rev. 8/01) Criminal Complaint

U.S. MAGISTRATE COURT
DS - SDTX
FILED

JAN 09 2009 IS

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

SOUTHERN

DISTRICT OF

TEXAS

Michael N. Milby, Clerk
Laredo Division

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

V.

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Hector Benavidez (30)

Ramiro J. Romero (33)

IN RAMIRO ROMERO JR.

(Name and Address of Defendant)

Jesus Pominguez-Rita

det + p/E

1/14/09

next atty.

det + p/E

1/14/09 @ 10Am

Case Number: 5:09-MJ-00065

I, the undersigned complainant state that the following is true and correct to the best of my

knowledge and belief. On or about January 7, 2009 in Webb County, in
 the Southern District of Texas Defendant(s) did,

(Track Statutory Language of Offense)

Knowingly and intentionally conspired to possess with the intent to distribute a controlled substance listed under Schedule II,
 Title II of the Controlled Substance Act, to wit; approximately two hundred thirty five (235.6) kilograms of cocaine.

in violation of Title 21 United States Code, Section(s) 846, 841(a)(1).

I further state that I am a(n) Special Agent, U.S. ICE and that this complaint is based on the
 following facts:

SEE ATTACHMENT A

Continued on the attached sheet and made a part of this complaint:

☒ Yes ☐ No

Juan R. Lozano
 Signature of Complainant

Juan R. Lozano

Printed Name of Complainant

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence,

January 9, 2009

Date

at Laredo, Texas
City and StateDiana Saldana, United States Magistrate Judge

Name and Title of Judicial Officer

[Signature]
 Signature of Judicial Officer

ATTACHMENT "A"

On January 7, 2009, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents assigned to the office of the Deputy Special Agent In Charge (DSAC), Laredo, agents along with agents from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and officers from the Laredo Police Department Narcotics Unit (LPDNU), initiated surveillance on Ramiro J. Romero, a truck driver for a local trucking company, after receiving information indicating that he would be transporting an unknown amount of narcotics.

On this same date, ICE agents along with agents from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and officers from the Laredo Police Department Narcotics Unit (LPDNU), initiated surveillance on Romero. Surveillance units observed Romero depart his place of residence and drive to French Ellison Truck Center, where he obtained a tractor hooked up to an empty trailer.

Surveillance units followed Romero to a local warehouse where he was loaded with a legitimate cargo shipment comprised of steel wire and cable. Approximately forty minutes later Romero left the warehouse and was followed north on Mines Road to a second warehouse located at [REDACTED] Laredo, TX. Agents observed Romero reverse the tractor-trailer into the warehouse. Approximately forty-five minutes later, surveillance units observed the tractor-trailer leave the warehouse and followed it south on Mines Road.

The tractor-trailer was followed to Highway 59 East in Laredo, Texas, where it was stopped by a Laredo Police Department (LPD) patrol unit for a traffic violation. At the scene of the traffic stop, Romero provided written consent to search the tractor trailer to the LPD officer. An LPD canine unit was utilized to conduct a search of the tractor-trailer, resulting in a positive alert to the presence of narcotics odor emanating from inside the trailer. A visual inspection inside the trailer revealed four cardboard boxes filled with approximately twenty cellophane-wrapped bundles of a white powdery substance which field tested positive for cocaine. The total weight of the cocaine as per Customs and Border Protection scales was two hundred thirty-five point fifty-six (235.56) kilograms.

Romero was transported to the DSAC Laredo office where ICE agents advised Romero of his Miranda Warnings in the Spanish language. Romero stated he understood his rights, signed a waiver of rights form and agreed to provide a statement. Romero confessed to ICE and DEA agents that he was aware he was transporting the cocaine to Atlanta, Georgia. Romero stated he was to be paid three hundred dollars (\$300.00) per kilogram of cocaine once he returned to Laredo.

During surveillance of the warehouse where the cocaine was loaded, agents observed a male subject later identified as Hector Benavides Jr., interacting with Romero while the cocaine was being loaded. After the vehicles departed the

warehouse, surveillance subsequently located Benavides at his residence, where he was approached by ICE agents. Benavides agreed to be interviewed and was transported to the DSAC Laredo office. Benavides was read his Miranda Warnings in the Spanish language. Benavides stated he understood his rights, signed a waiver of rights form and agreed to provide a statement. Benavides admitted to ICE and DEA agents that he provided his warehouse for the trans-loading of the cocaine in exchange for \$2,000.00.

Both Romero and Benavides were arrested and subsequently transported to the Webb County Detention Center without incident.